

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, NATO, EEC, IT, GR

SUBJ: VISIT OF GOG DEFENSE MINISTER AVEROFF

1. GREEK DEFENSE MINISTER EVANGELOS ANEROFF-TOSSITSA ARRIVED ROME MARCH 29 FOR THREE-DAY VISIT APPARENTLY DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO PROMOTE HIS BOOK "PRISONER IN ITALY". THE VOLUME PUBLISHED BY LONGANESI RELATES AVEROFF'S EXPERIENCES AS A PRISONER AT THE ITALIAN CONCENTRATION CAMP OF FERRAMONTI ANSIA IN 1942-43. AVEROFF, THEN PREFECT OF CORFU WAS TAKEN PRISONER DURING THE ITALIAN OCCUPATION OF GREECE. THE GREEK DEFENSE MINISTER ACTUALLY REMAINED IN ITALY UNTIL 1945 HAVING, WITH THE LIBERATION OF ITALY, BEEN TAKEN ON THE COMPLEMENT OF THE ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION.

2. AT THE OFFICIAL CEREMONY WHERE HE PRESENTED HIS BOOK UNDER AUSPOCES OF ROME'S MAYOR, AVEROFF DECLARED "I AM ALWAYS HAPPY TO COME TO ITALY, A COUNTRY I KNOW WELL AND LOVE A GREAT DEAL. HERE WITH THE ITALIANS I LIVED THROUGH TRAGIC DAYS WHICH TOGETHER WE OVER-
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CAME. I WAS A PRISONER HERE; I BEGAN WITH HATE AND ENDED WITH ESTEEM AND LOVE BECAUSE YOUR PEOPLE MAKE THEMSELVES LOVED BY THEIR DEEPEST QUALITY, HUMANITY".

3. IN MORNING OF MARCH 30, AVEROFF MET WITH DEFMIN LATTANZIO WHO, ACCORDING TO A MOD PRESS RELEASE NOTED TO HIS GREEK COUNTERPART THAT DESPITE GREECE'S INDEPENDENCE

OF CHOICE WHICH MAKES POSSIBLE FINDING A DIFFERENT ROLE
WITHIN THE MABIT OF THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE, THERE IS NO
DOUBT THAT GREECE AND ITALY ARE "UNITED IN A COMPLEX OF
RESPONSIBILITIES AND COMMON INTERESTS DIRECTED AT THE
MAINTENANCE OF PEACE AND GOOD RETATIONS WITH ALL THE
COUNTRIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN".

4. ON THE EVENING OF MARCH 31, AVEROFF SPOKE IN FLAWED
BUT FLUENT ITALIAN, TO A GROUP OF D STINGUISHED IF
SENESCENT ITALAIN INTERNATIONALISTS AND THEIR GUESTS AT
THE ITALIAN CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL CONCILIATION. IT
WAS A FULL HOUSE, MAKING THE ABSENCE OF THE TURKISH
AMBASSADOR FROM HIS CLEARLY MARKED SEAT ESPECIALLY EVIDENT.
AVEROFF'S REMARKS WERE THEMSELVES GENERALLY UNREMARKABLE.
CONSTANT NE NARAMANLIS COME ON FOR REPEATED AND LIBERAL
ACCOLADES -- "THE MAN WHO WAS THE INCARNATION OF THE WILL
OF THE PEOPLE OF GREECE". IN SUBSTANCE AVEROFF GAVE
A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF GREEK POLITICAL EVOLUTION OVER
THE PAST DECADE. (INDEED THE SUBJECT OF HIS TALK
WAS "THE RENAISSANCE OF GREEK DEMOCRACY AND HER
INTERNATIONAL POSITION".) SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS: ON
NATO -- WHEN CARAMANLIS RETURNED THE GREEK ARMY HAD NOT
YET BEEN "PURIFIED" OF ITS JUNTA ELEMENTS. IT WAS
THOSE ELEMENTS THAT BEGAN THE ANTI-NATO SLOGANEERING IN
GREECE. THE REASONS FOR THE GREEK DEPARTURE FROM THE
MILITARY SIDE OF THE ALLIANCE GO BACK TO THAT TRANSITIONAL
PERIOD. "WHAT COULD WE REPLY TO THOSE SLOGANS THAT WOULD
HAVE BEEN ACCEPTABLE TO A PEOPLE THAT WAS FRUSTRATED AND
HUMILIATED?" IT WAS NOT A SNAP DECISION, BUT RATHER ON
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DISCUSSED IN THE GOMERNMENT AT LENGTH AND IN DEPTH. NONE-
THELESS WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GREECE CAN BE SEPARATED
FROM THE DEFENSE OF THE WEST. WE ARE CONSTANTLY RE-
EXAMINING OUR POSITION "IN THE LIGHT OF OUR REASONS FOR
LEAVING" THE ALLIANCE. MEANWHILE OUR MILITARY FORCES ARE
UNER NATIONAL COMMAND BUT WE HAVE DECLARED UNRESERVEDLY
THAT IN THE EVENT OF WAR THEY WILL FORM PART OF THE ALLIANCE.
AND IN THE MEANTIME WE ARE DISCUSSING HOW IT CAN BE POSSIBLE
FOR GREECE TO RETURN AS A FULL PRTICIPANT IN THE ALLIANCE.
GREECE BELONGS TO NATO NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS A PART OF THE
WESTERN SYSTEM BUT BECAUSE IT IS A DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE. ON
THE EEC -- GREECE APPRECIATES ITALIAN SUPPORT FOR
MEMBERSHIP BUT NOT THE ITALIAN SUGGESTION THAT IT
HAPPEN IN GOOD TIME AND SOMEHOW CONNECTED WITH THE
ADMISSION OF OTHER APPLICANTS. "IT IS IMMORAL TO
EXPECT GREECE TO AWAIT THE TURNS OF OTHERS." HAVING
SIGNED THE ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT MANY YEARS AGO GREECE
HAS ALREADY PAID HEAVILY FOR MEMBERSHIP BY ALLOWING
DUTY FREE ENTRY OF EEC PRODUCTS. GREECE IN HIS OPINION WAS

NOT A COMPETITOR OF ITALY IN THE EUROPEAN MARKET
AS IS SOMETIMES SUGGESTED. IN THE AREA USUALLY
REFERRED TO, AGRICULTURE, GREEK EXPORTS WITHIN THE EEC
AMOUNT TO LESS THAN TEN PERCENT OF COMMUNITY CONSUMPTION.
GREECE AND ITALY HAVE THE SAME PROBLEMS IN AGRICULTURE AND
GREECE IN THE EEC WOULD NOT COMPETE WITH ITALY SO MUCH AS
PROVIDE GREATER SUPPORT FOR ITALIAN POSITIONS ON AGRI-
CULTURAL QUESTIONS. INTERNAL SITUATION -- GREECE FACES
THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION (OVER WHICH IT HAS NO CONTROL)
FROM A SUFFICIENTLY SOLID DOMESTIC BASE OF POLITICAL AND
ECONOMIC STABILITY.

5. AVEROFF'S REMARKS ON TURKEY WERE MORE IN SORROW THAN
IN ANGER -- GREECE WANTS AND NEEDS TURKISH FRIENDSHIP
AND COLLABORATION, IT IS IMPOSED BY THE REALITY OF
GEOGRAPHY.

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6. ON BILATERAL RELATIONS: GREECE HAS GOOD RELATIONS
WITH EASTERN EUROPE BASED ON PRINCIPLE OF NON-
INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS; GOOD RELATIONS
WITH THE ARAB WORLD; CLOSE RELATIONSHIP IS NATURALLY
WITH THE WEST, PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES WHICH
HAS COME TO THE AID OF GREECE IN THE PAST AND IS
HELPING NOW. GARDNER

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